THE LEGEND OF GREAT CROMWEL.

By MICHAEL DRAYTON Esquier.

AT LONDON
Printed by *Felix Kyngston*, and are to be sold by *I. Flasket*, dwelling in Paules Churchyard at the signe of the black Beare. 1607.

TO THE DESERVING MEMORIE OF MY WORTHY PATRON Sir *VValter Aſton*, Knight of the honorable Order of the Bath, I conſecrate my ſhort Poem.

TO THE READER.

TO thee that ſhalt peruſe this Poem, and not conuerſant in the hiſtories of thoſe times, (I am perſwaded) theſe briefe Annotations ſhall not be altogether impertinent. By reaſon the letter (without my knowledge) was choſen too large for the paper, I am conſtrained to doe as men ſometime preparing great bankets, and deceiued of table roome, to ſend in one diſh what ſhould haue ſerued to ſet out many; as to put in this one preface what ſhould haue been in marginall notes ſtuck in ſundrie places againſt the ſtanzaes to which they are apropriate: as this.

The 9. page, the 2. ſtanza, *For hauing Boſton buſineſſe* &c. The towne of *Boſton* ſued to the Pope for the reauthorizing their Hauen, which had been ſuſpended from that Sea, ſelecting one *Chambers* for that buſineſſe, who being on his way at *Antwerpe*, finding *Cromwell*, a man induſtrious and experienced, made choyce of him as his aſſiſtant, whom he wan to goe along with him to *Rome*.

The 11. page, the 1. ſtanza, *Ruſſell and Pace* &c. both great States-men of that time, and imployed by *Henry* the 8. in forraine Intelligence, after both Secretaries, and *Ruſſell* by him created Earle of *Bedford*.

The 15. page, the 3. ſtanza, *Where learned More and Gardiner* &c. For the former ſo famous, as who knoweth not I hold him vnworthie to know; the latter, *Stephen Gardiner*, after Biſhop of *Wincheſter*, a learned and politike Prelate, and one that was in the end a chiefe inſtrument of *Cromwels* ouerthrow.

The 20. page, the 2. ſtanza, *Bedford whoſe life* &c. This was that *Ruſſell*, as I haue ſaid before, by *Henry* the 8. crea-

ted

ted Earle of *Bedford*; as in the same stanza, *And reuerend Hayles*, &c. Sir *Christopher Hayles* Master of the Rolles, a man in great grace with the King, and an especiall fauourer of *Cromwell*.

The 23. page, the 1. stanza, line 2. *Of hospitable Friscobald and mee* &c. This *Friscobald* a Florentine Merchant, relieuing *Cromwell*, being in great necessitie, who after being Chancellor of England he honorably requited. This storie containeth some 14. stanzaes.

The 28. page, the 3. stanza, *And the King late obedient to her lawes, against the Clerke of Germany* &c. King *Henry the* 8. wrote a booke against *Luther*, which booke afterward *Luther* (forgetting all kingly titles) roughly answered.

The 34. page, the 1. stanza, *Pierce the wise Plowman* &c. The morall of Contrition and the Frier, the matter of which is *Pierce Plowmans* in his vision, the workmanship therof wholly mine owne, containing about 10. stanzaes.

FINIS.

TO MASTER MICHAEL DRAYTON his Friend.

I Would my verses could thy Booke aduance
B'oue these two fiends; Enuie, *and* Ignorance.
Thy subiect of such worth, thy pen so smooth,
Cannot escape the euer-sharpned tooth
Of that first monster; who himselfe deceiues,
Whil'st like a Cankar, hid among the leaues,
He seekes to o're spread, consume, at least defate,
The beautie of thy Muse, *and* Cromwels *grace.*
Such as haue been thy Apes (and shall not bee
Other then so) shall idely carpe at thee:
So much hath lewdnes wonne vpon this Age,
Such the contempt, the impudence, the rage
Of euery ragged Rymer, who would be
Within himselfe Monarch of Poesie.
But let them perish, whil'st thy workes thee raise
Vnto a greater fortune, then mens praise.

I. Cooke.

To his worthily deare friend Master Michael Drayton.

How those great titles that imploy our breath
To deck the marble, where our ashes lie,
Are trophies of the harmes, that in our death
Best doe expresse our golden miserie:
This Oracle thy Muse *diuinely reades*
In Cromwels *starres, that could ambition see,*
She would not wish their seeming-happie dreads,
That neerest Ioue *and his proud thunder bee.*
So short a period Fate hath limited
To giddie power, that breathes but grace and aire,
Soone cloy'd, or those that all haue lanished,
Or they, who full, of getting more despayre.
But thy deare rimes, whose happie Genius
Breathes a new life to Cromwels *dying name,*
And his rent honors, Enuie scattred thus,
Whiles in the booke of that great Herauld Fame,
Nought can them hurt, nor times consuming rust,
Nor th'angry frowne, that idely we adore;
This Pyramis shall stand, when in the dust
Their names are laid, the Diadem that wore.

Henry Lucas.

TO HIS WORTHIE FRIEND *Michael Drayton* vpon his Poem.

TO thee true image of Eternitie
Time; that reuolues the grauen leaues of Fate,
(Yet giu'ſt men Lethe *ſted of Memorie,*
Becauſe iniurious to all humane ſtate)
Cromwell *appeares apparelled in verſe,*
The fit'ſt and nobleſt ornament of fame,
The doome of Enuie gravely to reuerſe,
That elſe to darknes had condemn'd his name:
For Time thou know'ſt it only is the Muſe
That Man to immortalitie can raiſe.
O Greatnes how thy ſelfe doeſt thou abuſe,
With the ſlight ſoothing of poore verball praiſe?
Here ſhall you finde Factions (which are the rent,
And diſuniting of a league combin'd)
Make hauock in a ciuill gouerment;
The grace of Kings vnconſtant as the winde.
For as corruptiue bodies doe depend
On humorous matter, motions, and their pauſes;
So States begin, haue progreſſe, and doe end,
Becauſe they ſimpathize with naturall cauſes.
Here ſhall you finde (like muſick ſhifting moode)
How times doe change: viciſſitude and ſway
Of men, and manners; and by ſelfe decay
How each thing liues: force not the enuious broode
Renowned friend, but triumph in deſart,
Iudgement hath led thy Pen, and Truth thy Art.

Chriſtopher Brooke.

THE LEGEND OF GREAT CROMVELL.

AWak'd, and trembling betwixt rage and dreait
With the lowd ſlander (by the impious time)
That of my actions euery where is ſpred,
Through which to honour falſely I ſhould clime,
From the ſad dwelling of th'vntimely dead,
To quit me of that execrable crime,
Cromwell appeares his wretched plight to ſhow,
Much that can tell, one much that once did know.

Roughly not made vp in the common mould,
That with the vulgar vilely I ſhould die,
What thing ſo ſtrange of *Cromwell* is not told?
What man more praiſd? who more cõdemn'd then I?
That with the world when I am waxed old,
Moſt t'were vnfit that fame of me ſhould lie
With fables vaine my hiſtorie to fill,
Forcing my good, excuſing of my ill.

You that but hearing of my hated name,
Your ancient malice instantly bewray,
And for my sake your ill deserued blame
Vpon my legend publikely shall lay;
Would you forbeare to blast me with defame,
Might I so meane a priuiledge but pray,
He that three ages hath endur'd your wrong,
Heare him a little that hath heard you long.

Since *Rome*'s sad ruine here by me began,
Who her Religion pluckt vp by the roote,
Of the false world such hate for which I wan,
Which still at me her poisned darts doth shoot;
That to excuse it, doe the best I can,
Little I feare my labour me will boote:
Yet will I speake my troubled heart to ease,
Much to the minde, her selfe it is to please.

O powerfull number, from whose stricter law
Heart-mouing musicke did receiue the ground
Which men to faire ciuilitie did draw
With the brute beast when lawlesse he was found:
O if according to the wisers saw
There be a high diuinitie in sound,
Be now abundant prosp'rously to aide
The pen prepar'd my doubtful case to pleade.

Putney

Putney the place made blessed in my birth,
Whose meanest cottage simply me did shrowd,
To me as dearest of the English earth;
So of my bringing that poore village proud,
Though in a time when neuerthelesse the dearth
Of happie wits, yet mine so well allowd
That with the best she boldly durst conferr
Him that his breath acknowledged from her.

Twice flow'd proud *Thames* as at my cõming wood,
Striking the wondring borderers with feare,
And the pale *Genius* of that aged flood
Vnto my mother labouring did appeare,
And with a countenance much distraicted stood,
Threatning the fruit her pained wombe should beare:
My speedie birth being added thereunto,
Seemd to foretell that much I came to doe,

That was reserued for those worser daies,
As the great ebbe vnto so long a flow,
When what those ages formerly did raise,
This when I liu'd did lastly ouerthrow,
And that great'st labour of the world did seaze,
Only for which immedicable blow
Due to that time me dooming heauen ordaind,
Wherein confusion absolutely raign'd.

Vainly yet noted this prodigious signe,
Often predictions of most fearfull things,
As plagues, or warre, or great men to decline,
Rising of Commons, or the death of Kings;
But some strange newes though euer it diuine,
Yet forth them not immediatly it brings,
Vntill the effects men afterward did learne,
To know that me it chiefly did concerne.

Whil'st yet my father by his painfull trade,
Whose laboured Anuile only was his fee,
Whom my great towardnes strongly did perswade
In knowledge to haue educated mee:
But death did him vnluckily inuade,
Ere he the fruites of his desire could see,
Leauing me yong, then little that did know
How me the heauens had purpos'd to bestow.

Hopelesse as helplesse most might me suppose,
Whose meannesse seem'd their abiect breath to draw;
Yet did my breast that glorious fire inclose,
Which their dull purblind ignorance not saw,
Which still is setled vpon outward showes,
The vulgars iudgement euer is so raw,
Which the vnworthiest sottishly doe loue
In their owne region properly that moue.

Yet me my fortune so could not disguise,
But through this cloud were some that did me know,
Which then the rest more happie or more wise,
Me did relieue when I was driuen low,
Which as the staier by which I first did rise,
When to my height I afterward did grow,
Them to requite my bounties were so hie,
As made my fame through euery eare to flie.

That height and Godlike puritie of minde
Resteth not still, where titles most adorne
With any, nor peculiarly confinde
To names, and to be limited doth scorne:
Man doth the most degenerate from kinde,
Richest and poorest both alike are borne;
And to be alwaies pertinently good,
Followes not still the greatnes of our blood.

Pitie it is that to one vertuous man
That marke him lent to gentrie to aduance,
Which first by noble industrie he wan,
His baser issue after should inhance,
And the rude slaue not any good that can,
Such should thrust downe by what is his by chance:
As had not he been first that him did raise, (praise.
Nere had his great heire wrought his grandsires

How weake art thou that makeſt it thy end
To heape ſuch worldly dignities on thee,
When vpon fortune only they depend,
And by her changes gouerned muſt bee?
Beſides the dangers ſtill that ſuch attend,
Liuel'eſt of all men purtraied out in mee,
When that for which I hated was of all,
Soon'ſt from me fled, ſcarſe tarrying for my fall.

You that but boaſt your anceſtors proud ſtile,
And the large ſtem whẽce your vaine greatnes grew,
When you your ſelues are ignorant and vile,
Nor glorious thing dare actually purſue,
That all good ſpirits would vtterly exile,
Doubting their worth ſhould elſe diſcouer you,
Giuing your ſelues vnto ignoble things,
Baſe I proclaime you though deriu'd from Kings.

Vertue but poore, God in this earth doth place
Gainſt the rude world to ſtand vp in his right,
To ſuffer ſad affliction and diſgrace,
Not ceaſing to purſue her with deſpight:
Yet when of all ſhe is accounted baſe,
And ſeeming in moſt miſerable plight,
Out of her power new life to her doth take,
Leaſt then diſmaid when all doe her forſake.

That

That is the man of an vndaunted ſpirit,
For her deare ſake that offereth him to dye,
For whom, when him the world doth diſinherit,
Looketh vpon it with a pleaſed eye,
What's done for vertue thinking it doth merit,
Daring the proudeſt menaces deſie, (him,
More worth then life, how ere the baſe world rate
Belou'd of heauē, although the earth doth hate him.

Iniurious time, vnto the good vniuſt,
O how may weake poſteritie ſuppoſe
Euer to haue their merit from the duſt,
Gainſt them thy partialitie that knowes?
To thy report O who ſhall euer truſt,
Triumphant arches building vnto thoſe
Alowd the longeſt memorie to haue,
That were the moſt vnworthie of a graue?

But my cleere mettle had that powerfull heate,
As it not turn'd with all that fortune could:
Nor when the world me terribleſt did threat,
Could that place winne which my hie thoughts did
That waxed ſtill more proſperouſly great, (hold,
The more the world me ſtroue to haue control'd,
On my owne Columes conſtantly to ſtand,
Without the falſe helpe of anothers hand.

My

My youthfull course thus wisely did I steere,
T'auoid those rocks my wrack that else did thret:
Yet some faire hopes from farre did still appeare,
If that too much my wants me did not let:
Wherefore my selfe aboue my selfe to beare,
Still as I grew I knowledge stroue to get,
To perfect that which in the Embryon was,
Whose birth I foūd time well might bring to passe.

But when my meanes to faile me I did finde,
My selfe to trauell presently betooke,
As much distastfull to my noble minde,
That the vile world into my wants should looke,
And of my selfe industriously inclinde,
To measure others actions with my booke,
I might my iudgement rectifie thereby,
In matters that were difficult and hie.

When loe it hapt that fortune as my guide,
Of me did with such prouidence dispose,
That th'English Merchants then who did reside
At *Antwerpe*, me their Secretarie chose,
(As though in me to manifest her pride)
Whence to those principalities I rose,
To pluck me downe, whence afterward she fear'd
Beyond her power that almost she had rear'd.

When

When first the wealthie *Netherlands* mee train'd
In wise commerce most proper to the place,
And from my country carefully me wain'd,
That with the world did chiefly winne me grace,
Where great experience happily I gain'd;
Yet here I seem'd but tutor'd for a space,
For hie imployment otherwise ordain'd,
Till which the time I duly entertain'd.

For hauing *Boston* businesse in hand,
The change thereof on *Chambers* being laid,
Comming to *Flanders* hapt to vnderstand
Of me, whom he requested him to aid;
Of which when I the benefit had scand,
Weighing what time at *Antwerpe* I had staid,
Quickly me wonne faire *Fraly* to crie,
Vnder a cheerefull and more luckie skie.

For what the meanest cleerely makes to shyne,
Youth, wit, and courage, all in me concurre
In euery proiect, that so powerfull tryne
By whose kinde working brauely I did sturre,
Which to each hie and glorious designe
(The time could offer) freely did me spurre,
As forcing fate some new thing to prepare
(Shewing successe) t'attempt that could me dare:

Where now my ſpirit got roome inhabit ſelfe to ſhow,
To the fairſt pitch doth make a gallant flight,
From things that too much earthly were and low,
Strongly attracted by a Heauenly light,
Where higher ſtill it euery day did grow,
And being in ſo excellent a plight,
Crau'd but occaſion happily to proue
How much it ſcorn'd each vulgar ſpirit aboue.

The good ſucceſſe the affaires of *England* found,
Much praiſd the choice of me that had been made,
For where moſt men the deed did ſtrangely found,
I held it nothing boldly thought or wade,
My ſelfe, and thought the ſtraineſt wits I could
So could (but) ſo well I could perſwade,
As meerely I out of my happineſſe,
Compaſſe of Fortune and aduentures.

Not long it was ere *Rome* of one did ring
(Hardly ſhall *Rome* ſo full a thing ſee again)
Of freemens catches to the Popes ſtrong,
Which were in publike ſchooles to my diſcredit ſung,
Thither the which I was the firſt did bring,
That were vnknowne to Poetry till then
Light humours which in merry ſort did direct,
Euen of the wiſe in moſt plauſible reſpect.

And

And those from home that pensions were allow'd,
And here did for Intelligence remaine,
Vnder my power themselues were glad to shroud,
Russell and *Pace* yea oftentimes were faine,
When as their names they durst not haue auow'd,
Me into their societie t'reraine,
Rising before me mightie as they were,
Great though at home, yet did they need me there.

In forraine parts nere friends I yet forsake
That had before been deeply bound to mee,
And would againe I vse of them should make,
But still my starres command I should be free,
And all those offers lightly from me shake,
Which to requite I fettred else might bee,
And though that oft great perils me oppunge,
And meanes were weak, my mind was euer strong.

And those great wants fate to my youth did tie
Me from delights of those rich countries dryue,
Thereby inforc'd with painfull industrie
Against affliction manfully to striue,
Vnder her burthen faintly not to lie,
But since my good I hardly must deryue,
Vnto this same to make my selfe a way
Through all the power against me that could lay.

As a Comedian where my life I led,
For ſo a while my need did me conſtraine,
With other my poore countrimen (that plai'd)
Thither that came in hope of better gaine,
Whereas when fortune ſeem'd me low to tred
Vnder her feete, ſhe ſet me vp againe,
Vntill the vſe me bad her not to feare
Her good and ill that patiently could beare.

Till *Charles* the fift th'empetiall power did bend
Gainſt *Rome*, which *Burbon* skilfully did guide,
Which ſore declining *Italy* did rend;
For th'right that him her holineſſe denide,
Wholly her ſelfe inforced to defend
Gainſt him that iuſtly puniſhed her pride,
To which my ſelfe I laſtly did betake,
Seeing thereof what fortune meant to make.

And at the ſiege with that great Generall ſtood,
When he did girt her ſtubborne wals with ſteele,
Within her walls who well neere being ſtaru'd,
And that with faintneſſe she began to reele,
Shewing her ſelfe a little as ſhe ſwarued:
First her then noting I began to feele,
She whoſe great power ſo far abroad did roame,
What in her ſelfe ſhe truly was to dome.

That

That the great schoole of the false world was then,
Where her's their subtill practises did vie,
Amongst that mightie confluence of men,
French plots propt vp by English policie,
The German powers, false shuffling, and agen
All countermin'd by skilfull *Italy*,
Each one in possibilitie to win,
Great rests were vp and mightie hands were in.

Here first to worke my busie braine was set,
My inclination finding it to please
This stirring world which strongly still did whet
To temper in so dangerous affaies;
Which did strange formes of policies beget,
Besides in times so turbulent as these,
Wherein my studies hopefully did bend
Vnto that point the wisest made their end.

And my experience happily me taught
Into the secrets of those times to see,
From whence to *England* afterward I brought
Those slights of state deluged vnto mee,
In t'which were then but very few that sought,
Nor did with th'humour of that age agree,
After did great and fearfull things effect,
Whose secret working few did then suspect.

When thought 'were long it happed yet at last
Some hopes me homeward directly allur'd,
When many perils strangely I had past,
As many sad calamities endur'd
Beyond the Moone, when I began to cast
By my rare parts what plat might be procur'd,
If they at home were to the height me knowne,
How they would seeme compar'd with their owne

Or if that there the great should me neglect,
As I the worste that vainly did not feare,
To my experiance how to gaine respect
In other countries that do hold it deare,
And now occasion seemed to direct,
Whil'st still before me other rising were,
And some themselues had mounted to the skie,
Little before vnlike to mine as I

When now in *England* Bigamie with blood
Lately begot by Luxurie and pride,
In their greatfulnes peremptorie stood,
Some thereunto that diligently prid,
Stillie were fishing in that troubled flood
For future changes wisely to provide,
Finding the world so tickly then to build,
That till it brake it neuer could be well.

t floting long vpon my fathery ue,
hilst many doubts me seemed to appall,
ke to a barke that with the tide doth dryue,
uing not left to saile by with all,
hus with the tide by suffring I doe dryue
nto what hauen it shall yet go fall,
Vntill in fortune to put in the chaoce,
Casting the lot of my fortune to aduance.

aking my selfe to mightie Henry known,
which his gouernement vp stai'd,
hich from meane page to a little time was growne
p vnto him, that weight vpon him laid,
id being got the heere of his throne,
e the most daily the groweling downe-ward,
Leaning there on his wearied selfe to breath,
Whilst euen the great could scarce lag him beneath.

here learned Wolsey and Gardiner I met,
en in those times inchable for wit,
ole that were the chiefe spirits to whet,
nd did my humour excellently fit,
to their ambitious and vnbridled diet
here as their proud competitor to sit,
But loe I not to many it doth not,
Which doth as oft as it doth beget another.

This

This Founder of the palaces of Kings,
Whose veines with more then mortall spirit were fild,
A man ordained to the mightiest things,
In *Oxford* then determining to build
To Christ a College, and together brings
All that thereof the great foundation wills,
There me implacies, whose industrie he found
Worthie to worke upon the noblest ground.

Yet in the entrance wisely that did feare
Coyne might fall short, yet with his worke on fire,
Wherefore such houses as Religious were
Whose being no necessitie requires,
But that the greater very well might beare,
From *Rome* the Card'nall cunningly did hier,
Winning withall his Soueraigne to consent,
Both colouring with so holy an intent.

This like a symptome to a long disease
Was the forerunner to this mightie fall,
And but too vnaduisedly did raize
Vpon the part that ruinated all,
Which had the worke been of so many daies
And more againe, recouer hardly shall:
But loe it sunke which time did long vphold,
Where now it lies euen leuell with the mould.

Thus thou great *Rome* here first wast ouerthrowne,
Thy future harmes that blindly couldst not see,
And in this worke they only were thine owne,
Whose knowledge lent that deadly wound to thee,
Which to the world before had they not shewne,
Nere had those seeress been descri'd by mee,
Nor by thy wealth so many from the plow
Worne those hie types wherein they florish now.

After when as the Cardinall againe
Into hie fauour with the King mee brought,
With whom my selfe so well I did demeane,
As that I seem'd to exercise his thought,
And his great liking strongly did retaine
With what before my Master me had taught,
From whose example by those Cels were small,
Sprang the subuersion lastly of them all.

Yet many a let was cast into the way,
Wherein I ran so steddily and right,
And many a snare my aduersaries lay,
Much wrought they with their power, much with their slight,
Wisely perceiuing that my smallest stay
Fully requir'd the vtmost of their might,
To my ascendant hasting me to clime,
There as the first predomining the time,

Knowing what wealth me earnestly did vvooe,
Which I through *VVolsey* hapned had to finde,
And could the path most perfectly vntoo,
The King thereafter earnestly inclin'd,
Seeing besides what after I might doe
If so great power me fully were assign'd,
By all their meanes against me strongly wrought,
Lab'ring as fast to bring their Church to nought.

Whil'st to the King continually I sue,
And in this businesse faithfully did stirre
Strongly t'approue my iudgement to be true
Gainst those who most supposed me to erre,
Nor the least meanes which any way I knew
Might grace me, or my purposes preferre
Did I omit, till wonne I had his eare,
Most that me mark'd whē least he seem'd to heare.

This wound to them thus violently giuen,
Enuie at me her sharpest darts doth roue,
Affecting the supremacie of heauen,
As the first Giants warring against *Ioue*,
Heap'd hils on hils, the Gods till they had driuen
The meanest shapes of earthly things to proue:
So must I shift from them against me rose,
Mortall their hate, as mightie were my foes.

But their great force against me wholly bent
Preuail'd vpon my purposes so farre,
That I my ruine scarsely could preuent,
So momentarie worldly fauours are,
That till the vtmost of their spight was spent,
Had not my spirit maintain'd a manly warre,
Risen they had when laid I had been low,
Vpon whose ruine after I did grow.

When the great King their strange reports that tooke
That as pernitious as they potent were,
Which at the faire growth of my fortune strooke,
Whose deadly malice blame me not to feare,
Me at the first so violently shooke,
That they this frame were likely downe to beare,
If resolution with a setled brow
Had not vpheld my peremptorie vow.

Yet these encounters thrust me not awry,
Nor could my courses force me to forsake,
After this shipwrack I againe must trye
Some happier voyage hopefull still to make,
The plots that barren long we see did lie,
Some fitting season plentifully take,
One fruitfull harvest frankly doth restore
What many winters hindred had before.

That to account I ſtrickly call my wit
How it this while had managed my ſtate,
My ſoule in counſell ſummoning to ſit,
If poſſible to turne the courſe of fate,
For waies there be the greateſt things to hit,
If men could finde the peremptorie gate,
And ſince I once was got ſo neere the brinke
More then before, t'would grieue me now to ſinke.

Bedford whoſe life (ſome ſaid) that I had ſau'd
In *Italy*, one me that fauoured moſt,
And reuerend *Hayley* who but occaſion craud
To ſhew his loue, no leſſe that I had coſt,
Who to the King perceiuing me diſgrac'd,
Whoſe fauour I vnluckily had loſt,
Both with him great, a foote ſet in withall
If not to ſtay, to qualifie my fall.

Hie their regard, yet hier was their inhap,
Well neere quite ſunke recouer me that could,
And once more get me in for Fortunes lap,
Which well my ſelfe might teach me there to hold,
Eſcap'd out of ſo dangerous a trap,
Whoſe praiſe by me to ages ſhall be told,
As the two props by which I only roſe,
When moſt ſuppreſt, moſt trod on by my foes.

This

This me to vrge the premunire wonne,
Ordain'd in matters dangerous and hie,
In t'which the heedlesse Prelacie were runne,
That back vnto the Papacie did flye,
Sworne to that sea, and what before was done
Due to the King, dispensed were thereby,
In t'which first entring offred me the meane
That to throw downe all eadie that did leane.

This was to me that ourflowing sourse,
From whence his bounties plentifully spring,
Whose speedie current with vnusuall force
Bare me into the bosome of the King,
By putting him into that readie course
Which soone to passe his purposes might bring,
Where those which late imperiously controld me,
Pale strook with fear stood trembling to behold me.

When state to me those ceremonies show'd
That to so great a fauorite were due,
And fortune still with honours did me load,
As though no meane she in my rising knew,
Or heauen to me more then to man had ow'd,
(What to the world vnheard of was and new)
And wan to other sparing of her store
Till she could giue, or ask I could no more.

Thoſe hie preferments heapon me laid,
Might make the world me publikely to know
Such as in iudgement rightly being waid,
Seemed too great for me to vndergoe,
Nor could his hand from powring on be staid
Vntill I ſo abundantly did flow,
That looking downe whence lately I was cloame,
Danger bid feare if further I ſhould roame.

For firſt from Knighthood riſing in degree,
The office of the Iewell houſe my lot,
After the Rowles he frankly gaue to mee,
From whence a priuie Counſeller I got,
Choſe of the Garter: and the Earle to bee
Of *Eſſex*: yet ſufficient theſe not
But to the great Vicegerencie I grew,
Being a title as ſupreame as new.

So well did me theſe dignities befit,
And honour ſo me euery way became,
As more then man I had been made for it,
Or as from me it had deriu'd the name:
Where was that man whoſe loue I not requit
Beyond his owne imaginarie aime,
Which had me ſuet ourd nerely being driuen
As things to me that idely were not giuen.

What

What tongue (so low the tale shall not report
Of hospitable *Frisobald* and mee,
And shew in how reciprocall a sort
My thankes did with his curtesie agree,
When (as my meanes in *Italy* were short)
That me relieu'd, (so great that would not bee,
When I (of *England* Chancellor) was made,
His former bounties liberally repaid.

The maner briefly gentler *Muse* relate,
Since oft before it wisely hath been told,
The sudden change of vnauoided fate,
That famous Merchant-peere did *Frisobald*
Grew poore, and the small remnant of his state
Was certaine goods to *England* he had sold,
Which in the hands of Debtors but bad,
Small hope to get, yet (better meanes) he had.

Hither his wants him forcibly constraind,
Though with long trauell both by land and seas,
Led by this hope that only now remaind,
Whereon his fortune finally he laies,
And if he found that friendship here were faind,
Yet at the worst it better should him please,
Farre out of sight to perish here vnknowne,
Then vnrelieu'd be pitied of his owne.

It chanc'd as I toward *Westminster* did ride,
Mongst the great concourse passing to and fro,
An aged man I happily espide,
Whose outward looks much inward grief did show,
Which made me note him, and the more I eyd
Him, me thought more precisely I should know,
Reuoluing long it came into my minde,
This was the man to me had been so kinde.

Was therewithall so ioyed with his sight,
(With the deare sight of his so reuerend face)
That I could scarcely keepe me from a slight,
And in mine armes him openly embrace,
Weighing yet (well) what fame might,
He being a stranger and the publike place
Check my affection, till some fitter hower
On him my loue effectually might shower.

Neuer quoth I was fortune so vniust
As to do wrong vnto thy noble hart,
What man so wicked could betray the trust
Of one so vpright of so good desart?
And though obey necessitie thou must,
As when the great sun hot same to me thou art,
Let me alone the last be lost of all,
That from the rest declin'd not with thy fall.

And

And calling to a Gentleman of mine,
Wise and discreete that well I knew to bee,
Shew'd him that stranger, whose deiected eyne
Fixt on the earth nere once lookt vp at mee,
Bid yonder man come home to me and dine
(Quoth I) bespeake him reuerently (you see)
Scorne not his habit, little canst thou tell
How rich a minde in those meane rags doth dwell.

He with my name that kindly did him greete,
Slowly cast vp his deadly-mouing eye,
That long time had been fixed on his feete,
To looke no higher then his miserie,
Thinking him more calamitie did greete,
Or that I had supposed him some Spye,
With a deepe sigh that from his heart he drew,
Quoth he his will accomplisht be by you.

My man departed and the message done,
He whose sad heart with strange impressions strooke,
To thinke vpon this accident begun,
And on himselfe suspitiously to looke,
Into all doubts he fearfully doth runne,
Oft himselfe cheering oft himselfe forsooke:
Strangely perplext vnto my house doth come,
Not knowing why iudg'd nor dreading yet his

My ſeruants ſet his comming to attend,
That were therein not common for their skill,
Whoſe vſage yet the former did amend:
He hop'd not good, nor guiltie was of ill,
But as a man whoſe thoughts were at an end,
Fortune (quoth he) then worke on me thy will,
Wiſer then man I thinke he were that knew
Whence this may come, or what therof enſue.

His honoured preſence ſo did me inflame,
That though being then in preſence of my Peeres,
Daine not the leſſe to meete him as he came,
(That very hardly could containe my teares)
Kindly ſalute him, call him by his name,
And oft together aske him how he cheeres,
With ſtill along maintaining the extreame,
Yet thought the man he had been in a dreame.

At length t'wake him gently I began
With this demaund, if once he did not know
One *Thomas Cromwell* a poore Engliſhman,
By him relieu'd when he was driuen low:
When I perceiu'd he my remembrance wan,
Yet with his teares it ſilently did ſhow:
I wept for woe to ſee mine hoſt diſtreſt,
But he for ioy to ſee his happie gueſt.

Him to the Lords I publisht by my praise,
And at my table carefully him set,
Recounting them the many sundrie waies
I was vnto this gentleman in debt,
How great he was in *Florence* in those daies,
With all that grace or reuerence him might get:
Which all the while yet silently he heares,
Moisting (among) his viands with his teares.

And to lend fulnes lastly to his fate
Great summes I gaue him, and what was his due
Made knowne, my selfe became his aduocate,
And at my charge his creditors I sue,
Recouering him vnto his former state:
Thus he the world began by me anew,
That shall to all posteritie expresse
His honored bountie and my thankfulnesse.

But *Muse* recount, before thou further passe,
How this great change so quickly came about,
And what the cause of this sad downfall was,
In euery part the spatious Realme throughout,
Being effected in so little space,
Leaue not thereof posteritie to doubt,
That with the world obscured else may bee,
If in this place reuealed not by thee.

If the whole land did on the Church relie,
Hauing full power Kings to account to call,
That to the world read only policie,
Beſides Heauens keyes to ſtop or let in all,
Let me but know from her ſupremacie
How ſhe ſhould come ſo ſuddenly to fall:
Twas more then chance ſure put a hand thereto,
That had the power ſo great a thing to do.

Or ought there were had biding vnder Sunne,
Who would haue thought thoſe edifices great,
Which firſt Religion holily begun,
The Church approu'd, and wiſdome richly ſeate,
Deuotion nouriſh'd, faith allowance wonne,
And all that them might any way compleate,
Should in their ruines laſtly buried lye,
But that begun and ended from the skye?

And the King late obedient to her lawes,
Againſt the Clerke of *Germany* had writ,
As he that firſt ſtird in the Churches cauſe,
Againſt him greatlieſt that oppugned it,
And wan from her ſo graceful an applauſe,
Then in her fauour chiefly that did ſit,
That as the prop, whereon the only ſtaith,
Him ſhe inſtyl'd *Defender of the faith.*

But

But not their power, whose wisdomes them did place
In the first ranke, the oracles of state,
Who that opinion strongly did embrace,
Which through the land receiued was of late,
Then ought at all preuailed in this case,
O powerfull doome of vnauoided fate,
Whose depth not weake mortality can know,
Who can vphold what heauen will ouerthrow?

When time now vniuersally did show
The power to her peculiarly annex'd,
With most abundance then when she did flow,
Yet euery hower still prosp'rously she wex'd,
But the world poore did by loose riots grow,
Which serued as an excellent pretext,
And colour gaue to pluck her from her pride,
Whose only greatnes suffred none beside.

Likewise to that posteritie did doubt
Those at the first not rightly did adore,
Their fathers that too credulous deuout
Vnto the Church contributed their store,
And to recouer only went about
What their great zeale had lauished before,
On her a strong hand violently laid,
Praying on that, they gaue for to be pray'd.

And now the King set in a course so right,
Which I for him laboriously had tract,
(Who till I learn'd him, did not know his might)
I still to prompt his power with nie to act,
Into those secrets got so deepe a sight,
That nothing lastly to his furtherance lackt,
And by example plainly to him showne,
How all might now be easly ouerthrowne.

In taking downe yet of this goodly frame
He suddenly not brake off euery band,
But tooke the power first from the Papall name,
After a while let the Religion stand,
When lim by lim he daily did it lame,
First tooke a leg, and after tooke a hand,
Till the poore semblance of a bodie left,
But all should stay it, vtterly bereft.

a For if some Abbey hapned voyd to fall
By death of him that the superiour was,
Gaine that did first Church libertie enthrall,
Only supreame, promoted to the place,
Mongst many bad the worst most times of all,
Vnder the colour of some others grace,
That by the slander, from his life should spring,
Into contempt it more and more might bring.

This

This time from heauen when by the ſecret courſe,
Diſſenſion vniuerſally began,
(Preuailing as a planetarie ſourſe)
I'th Church beleeuing, as Mahumitan,
When *Luther* firſt did thoſe opinions nurſe,
Much from great *Rome* in little ſpace that wan,
It to this change ſo aptly did diſpoſe,
From whoſe ſad ruine ours ſo great aroſe.

That here that fabrique vtterly did faile,
Which powerfull fate had limited to time,
By whoſe ſtrong law it naturally muſt quaile,
From that proud height to which it long did clime,
Letting gainſt it the contrary preuaile,
Therein to puniſh ſome notorious crime,
For which at length iuſt dooming heauē decreed,
That on her buildings ruine here ſhould feed.

Th'authoritie vpon her ſhe did take,
And vſe thereof in euery little thing,
Finding her ſelfe how oft ſhe did forſake,
In her owne bounds her neuer limiting,
That awfull feare and due obediēce brake
Which her reputed holineſſe did bring,
From ſlight regard ſoone brought her into hate
With thoſe that much diſliked her eſtate.

And that those parts she cunningly had plai'd,
Beliefe vnto her miracles to winne,
Vnto the world were euery day bewrai'd,
From which the doubt did of her power begin,
Damnation yet to question what she said
Made most suspect the faith they had been in,
When their saluation easly might be bought,
Found not this yet the way that they had sought.

When those ill humours ripned to a head,
Bred by the ranknes of the plentious land,
And they not only strangely from her fled,
Bound for her ancient libertie to stand,
But what their fathers gaue her being dead,
The sonnes rap'd from her with a violent hand,
And those her buildings most of all abusd,
That with the waight their fathers coffins brusd.

The wisest and most prouident but build,
For time againe to wastfully destroy,
The costly piles and monuments we guild,
Succeeding time shall reckon but a toy,
Vicissitude impartially wild,
The goodliest things be subiect to annoy,
And what one age did studiously maintaine,
The next againe accounteth vile and vaine.

Yet

Yet time doth tell, in ſome things they did erre,
That put their helpe her brauerie to deface,
When as the wealth, that taken was from her,
Others ſoone raiſed, that did them diſplace,
Their titles and their offices conferre
On ſuch before, as were obſcure and baſe, (goe,
Who would with her they likewiſe downe ſhould
And o'rthrew them that her did ouerthrow.

And th'Romiſh rites that with a cleerer ſight
The wiſeſt thought they iuſtly did reiect,
They after ſaw that the receiued light
Not altogether free was from defect,
Myſterious things being not conceiued right,
Thereof bred in the ignorant neglect,
For in opinion ſomething ſhort doth fall,
Wants there hath been and ſhall be ſtill in all.

But negligent ſecuritie and eaſe
Vnbridled ſenſualitie begat,
That only ſought his appetite to pleaſe,
As in the midſt it of abundance ſat,
The Church not willing others ſhould her praiſe
That ſhe was leane, when as her lands were fat,
Her ſelfe to too much libertie did giue,
Which ſome perceiu'd that in thoſe times did liue.

Pierce the wiſe Plowman in his viſion ſaw
Conſcience ſore hurt, yet ſoter was affraid
The ſeuen great ſinnes to hell him like to draw,
And to wiſe Clergie mainly cri'd for aid;
Falne ere he wiſt (whom perill much did awe)
On vncleane Prieſts whil'ſt faintly he him ſtaid,
Willing good Clergie t'eaſe his wretched caſe,
Whom theſe ſtrong Giants hotly had in chaſe.

Clergie call'd Friers which neere at hand did dwell,
And them requeſts to take in hand the cure,
But for their Leechcraft that they could not well,
He liſted not their dreſſing to endure;
When in his eare Need ſoftly him did tell
(And of his knowledge more did him aſſure)
They came for gain their end which they did make,
For which on them the charge of ſoules they take.

And voluntarie pouertie profeſt,
By food of Angels ſeeming as to liue;
But yet with them th'accounted were the beſt
That moſt to their fraternitie doe giue,
And beyond number that they were increaſ'd:
If ſo (quoth Conſcience) thee may I beleeue,
Then t'is in vaine more on them to beſtow,
If beyond number like they be to grow.

The Frier ſoone feeling Conſcience had him found,
And hearing how Hypocriſie did thriue,
That many Teachers euery where did wound,
For which Contrition miſerably did grieue:
Now in deceit to ſhew himſelfe profound,
His former hopes yet laſtly to reuiue
Gets the Popes letters, whereof he doth ſhape
Him a diſguiſe from Conſcience to eſcape.

And ſo towards goodly Vnitie he goes,
A ſtrong-built Caſtle ſtanding very hie,
Where Conſcience liu'd to keepe him from his foes,
Whom leſt ſome watchfull Centinell ſhould ſpie,
And him vnto the garriſon diſcloſe,
His cowle about him carefully doth tie,
Creepes to the gate and cloſely thereat beate,
As one that entrance gladly would intreate.

Peace the good porter readie ſtill at hand
It doth vnpin, and praies him God to ſaue,
And after ſaluing kindly doth demaund
What was his will, or who he there would haue?
The Frier low lowting croſſing with his hand,
Speak with Contrition (quoth he) I would craue.
Father (quoth Peace) your comming is in vaine,
For him of late Hypocriſie hath ſlaine.

God ſhield (quoth he) and turning vp the eyes,
To former health I hope him to reſtore,
For in my skill his ſound recouerie lies,
Doubt not thereof if ſetting God before.
Are you a Surgeon, Peace againe replies?
Yea (quoth the Frier) and ſent to heale his ſore:
Come neere (quoth Peace) and God your cōming ſpeed,
Neuer of help Contrition had more need.

And for more haſte he haleth in the Frier,
And his Lord Conſcience quickly of him told,
Who entertain'd him with right friendly cheere:
O Sir (quoth he) intreate you that I could
To lend your hand vnto my Cooſin deare
Contrition, whom a ſore diſeaſe doth hold,
That wounded by Hypocriſie of late,
Now lieth in moſt deſperate eſtate.

Sir (quoth the Frier) I hope him ſoone to cure,
Which to your comfort quickly you ſhall ſee,
Will he awhile my dreſſing but endure;
And to Contrition therewith commeth hee,
And by faire ſpeech himſelfe of him aſſure,
But firſt of all going thorough for his fee:
Which done (quoth he) if outwardly you ſhow
Sound, t'not auailes if inwardly or no.

But ſecretly aſſoiling of his ſin,
No other med'cine will vnto him lay,
Saying that heauen his ſiluer him ſhould win,
And to giue Friers was better then to pray,
So he were ſhrieu'd what need he care a pin.
Thus with his patient he ſo long did play,
Vntill Contrition had forgot to weepe,
This the wiſe Plowman ſhew'd me from his ſleepe.

He ſaw their faults that looſly liued then,
Others againe our weakneſſes ſhall ſee:
For this is ſure he bideth not with men
That ſhall know all to be what they ſhould bee:
Yet let the faithfull and induſtrious pen
Haue the due merit, but returne to mee,
Whoſe fall this while blind fortune did deuiſe,
To be as ſtrange as ſtrangely I did riſe.

Thoſe ſecret foes yet ſubt'ly to deceiue,
That me maligning lifted at my ſtate,
The King to marry forward ſtill I heaue,
(His former wife being repudiate)
To *Anne* the ſiſter of the Duke of *Cleaue*,
The German Princes to confederate,
To back me ſtill gainſt thoſe againſt me lay,
Which as their owne retain'd me here in pay.

Which my deſtruction principally wrought,
When afterward abandoning her bed,
Which to his will to paſſe could not be brought,
So long as yet I beare about my head
The only man her ſaftie that had ſought,
Of her againe and only fauoured,
Which was the cauſe he haſted to my end,
Vpon whoſe fall hers likewiſe did depend.

For in his hie diſtemprature of blood
Who was ſo great whoſe life he did regard?
Or what was it that his deſires withſtood
He not inueſted were it nere ſo hard?
Nor held he me ſo abſolutely good,
That though I croſt him yet I ſhould be ſpar'd,
But with thoſe things I laſtly was to goe,
Which he to ground did violently throw.

When *VVinchester* with all thoſe enemies
Whom my much power from audience had debar'd,
The longer time there miſchiefs to deuiſe,
Feeling with me how laſtly now it far'd,
When I had done the King that did ſuffice,
Laſtly thruſt in againſt me to be heard,
When all was ill contrarily turn'd good,
Making a maine to th'ſhedding of my blood.

And

And that the King his action doth deny,
And on my guilt doth altogether lay,
Hauing his ryot satisfied thereby,
Seemes not to know how I therein did sway,
What late was truth conuerted heresie:
When he in me had purchased his pray,
Himselfe to cleere and satisfie the sin,
Leaues me but late his instrument therein.

Those lawes I made my selfe alone to please,
To giue me power more freely to my will,
Euen to my equals hurtfull sundrie waies,
(Forced to things that most doe say were ill)
Vpon me now as violently ceaze,
By which I lastly perisht by my skill,
On mine owne neck returning (as my due)
That heauie yoke wherein by me they drew.

My greatnes threatned by ill-boding eyes,
My actions strangely censured of all,
Yet in my way my giddines not sees
The pit wherein I likely was to fall:
O were the sweets of mans felicities
Often amongst not temp'red with some gall,
He would forget by his oreweening skill,
Iust heauen aboue doth censure good and ill.

Things ouer ranck doe neuer kindly beare,
As in the corne the fluxure when we ſee
Fill but the ſtraw when it ſhould feed the eare,
Rotting that time in ripening it ſhould bee,
And being once downe it ſelfe can neuer reare:
With vs well doth this ſimilie agree,
(By the wiſe man) due to the great in all,
By their owne weight b'ing broken in their fall.

Selfe-louing man what ſooner doth abuſe,
And more then his proſperitie doth wound?
Into the deepe but fall how can he chuſe
That ouer ſtrides whereon his foote to ground?
Who ſparingly proſperitie doth vſe,
And to himſelfe doth after-ill propound,
Vnto his height who happily doth clime,
Sits aboue fortune, and controlleth time.

Not chuſing that vs moſt delight doth bring,
And moſt that by the generall breath is freed,
Wooing that ſuffrage, but the vertuous thing
Which in it ſelfe is excellent indeed,
Of which the depth and perfect managing
Amongſt the moſt, but few there be that heed,
Affecting that agreeing with their blood,
Seldome enduring neuer yet was good.

But whil'ſt we ſtriue too ſuddenly to riſe
By flattring Princes with a ſeruill tong,
And being ſoothers to their tyrannies,
Worke our more woes by what doth many wrong,
And vnto others tending iniuries,
Vnto our ſelues it hapneth oft among
In our owne ſnares vnluckily are caught,
Whil'ſt our attempts fall inſtantly to naught.

The Counſell Chamber place of my arreſt,
Where chiefe I was, when greateſt was the ſtore,
And had my ſpeeches noted of the beſt,
That did them as hie Oracles adore:
A Parliament was laſtly my enqueſt,
That was my ſelfe a Parliament before,
The Tower hill ſcaffold laſt I did aſcend:
Thus the great'ſt man of *England* made his end.

FINIS.